



**JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER
AND FORT POLK
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
Press Release
7073 RADIO ROAD
FORT POLK LA 71459-5342
Voice: (337) 531-4630
Fax: (337) 531-6014**



Release Number: 0407-13

April 13, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Samantha Evans (337) 531-4630

Soldiers suppress slacking off for 17 hours to sustain seniority status

by Kristin Gordon
Guardian Staff Writer

FORT POLK, La. - Soldiers suited from helmet to boot with battle gear, rucksacks, and an M-16 had already won their first challenge of the day... to beat daylight for a 6 a.m. formation. More than 142 warriors stood in 20 squad formations at the quarter-mile track while the officer in charge, Lt. Erix Phillips, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Combat Support Brigade (ME), covered the rules and regulations of what would become a 17-hour "no slack" mission April 4.

Soldiers participating in the 1st CSB "no slack stakes" challenge were from the 603rd Transportation Company, 488th Quartermaster Company (Force Provider) and the 383rd Movement Control Team.

"'No slack' is the battalion's motto," said Phillips. "The stakes is what our battalion commander, Colonel Green, implemented to improve unit cohesion, morale and instill the competitive spirit in the Soldiers. It is also to get them ready for what they will be doing when we deploy to Iraq."

The goal is to have a no slack stakes competition each quarter, according to Lt. Col. Ronald Green, 142nd CSSB commander.

-more-

SLACKS 2/2/2

“We held the first competition in January, the second one today and will have a third one later in the year,” said Green. “The no slack stakes in January was very physical. It consisted of a four-mile team run while carrying water jugs and other heavy objects through the woods. After the run, Soldiers went through a confidence course and took a test on escalation of force. Skills used today focus on land navigation, leading troops and weapons familiarization. Every tactic, technique and procedure used during the no slack is a skill Soldiers will need in theater.”

“Every squad has an equal opportunity to excel,” said Phillips. “The only difference between the squads is that they don’t have the exact land navigation points. Their points are varied based on what lanes they get, but they cover the same general area. The event is not timed, but the squad leader receives bonus points based on how quickly they move across the course.”

Squads were assigned their first task and moved out in different directions that led them on a 12-mile trek. For some, the first of three stations was the Engagement Skills Training Center, where simulated scenarios are projected on a screen. Soldiers were under attack in the current simulation and their weapons destroyed. They had to engage targets using a weapon found on the ground to the best of their ability, according to Phillips. Soldiers also assembled and disassembled a 50-caliber weapon and performed immediate action and function checks on their weapon. The final task at the station was to perform combative tasks and demonstrate maneuvers. By 7:30 a.m., dark clouds released a relentless downpour which added extra demands to the course’s followers.

Another warrior task station was located behind Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital. Basic and advanced land navigation skills were tested during the course using a plugger (global positioning system), lensatic (compass that measures or lays out magnetic bearings) and orienteering (using a topographic map to move around).

“At one point Soldiers will receive a strip map which contains no grid coordinates and they will have to use terrain association to identify what points they are going to find,” said Phillips.

The first squad arrived at Marion Bonner Lake around 1 p.m. and received an assignment that involved using a radio, identifying and reacting to an improvised explosive device and evaluating

-more-

SLACKS 3/3/3

and treating casualties. Squads also received a 10-question test on entry control point procedures and rules of engagement.

“At the end of the day we will bring the squads together, tabulate their scores, and determine who the second quarter no slack stakes champs are,” said Phillips. “Soldiers perform better when they realize there is a goal to accomplish. When they are competing with their peers, it becomes that much more of a goal. It’s all about bragging rights.”

The squad leader from the winning squad received an Army Commendation Medal. The most valued participant received an Army Achievement Medal. There were coins and achievement certificates for the pathfinder category - the highest rate of correct locations of land navigation points; the dead eye squad - the highest accurate engagement rate for the engagement skills trainer; and the most valuable participant chosen by each squad.

The competition wrapped up at 11 p.m., after feeding Soldiers a hearty meal at the quarter-mile track, according to Phillips. The victorious squad was from the 488th and their winning squad leader was Cpl. Tony Newman. The winning squad included: Pfc. Carlos Gonzales, Pfc. Kendall Smith, Pfc. Victor Murry, Pvt. Devin Wilkinson, Pvt. Matthew Beyer and Pvt. Andrew Czahor.

-30-



A Soldier from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Combat Support Brigade, is dressing fictitious wounds on a Soldier garnishing a mask. The Soldier, at right, was the first to arrive with his squad at the Marion Bonner Recreation Site during a 142nd CSSB “No Slack Stakes” competition April 4.



Soldiers are evaluated in combatives as they demonstrate a choke move under heavy rain outside the Engagement Skills Training Center April 4. During this leg of the competition, squads were rated on weapons, combatives and simulated scenarios.

All photos taken by Kristin Gordon